A

LETTER

to

Dr. MOORE.

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LETTER

TO

DR. MOORE,

ON HIS

DEFENCE OF BRITISH HUMANITY,

AGAINST THE

CALUMNY OF A MEMBER

OF THE

FRENCH CONVENTION.

"Whenever I hear the current of abuse running hard against my "best friends, I never think them in such danger as when Mrs. Can-"dour undertakes their defence."

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. OWEN, NO. 168, PICCADILLY.

MDCCXCIV.

A

LETTER.

SIR,

AS an Engliſhman, (or if you will, a Briton, for I do not mean in the preſent caſe, to make any diſtinction between the northern and ſouthern parts of the iſland) I muſt think you have not done juſtice to your countrymen, in your manner of defending them from the imputation of being equally cruel with the French barbarians, which, you tell us, a member of the Convention tried to fix on them. As you, Sir, have not anſwered this imputation, by the ſtrong and incontrovertible

facts, which you might have adduced to confute it; I ſhall, however, unequal in ability to you, take the taſk on myſelf, and which I do with leſs diffidence, as it is a matter not depending on elegance of ſtile, or acuteneſs of argument, but on clear hiſtorical evidence.

I ſhall begin with quoting the paſſage from your Journal. "In a converſation which I had this day with a Member of the Convention, I delivered my ſentiments pretty freely upon the ſubject of the murder of Mr. de la Rochefoucault, and ſome ſimilar events which have taken place of late in France: he expreſſed the utmoſt horror at them, but added, that ſcenes of the ſame kind had been acted in every country of Europe in times of revolution and diſſertion, when great intereſts were at ſtake, and when the human paſſions were enflamed and agitated in the higheſt degree. He mentioned certain barbarous

cruelties

cruelties that had been committed, on both ſides, during the conteſt between the white roſe and the red in England: he enlarged on the maſſacre in Ireland in the reign of Charles the Firſt, and on the perfidious affair of Glenco, in Scotland, in the reign of king William. He added, that every thing conſidered, perhaps it belonged leſs to one of my nation than of any other, to complain of the exceſſes of revolutions or civil diſſentions; and with a ſmile, he quoted from Juvenal,

Quis tulerit Gracchos de ſeditione querentes?

'I did not chooſe to puſh the argument farther, although, reſpecting the reciprocal cruelties which were committed during the conteſt between the white roſe and the red, the remark was obvious, that what a nation had done during an age of barbariſm and ſuperſtition, is not to be compared with that of another in the days of know-

ledge and refinement, and *perhaps* it would not be difficult to ſhew, that the barbarities he enumerated, which had been committed in Great Britain and Ireland, were equalled by thoſe committed in France at the ſame periods; *in which caſe*, there has been ſuch an accumulation here of late, that, on comparing accounts, a moſt dreadful balance of horrors would remain with this country.' Dr. Moore's Journal, Vol. II. pages 229—231.

That you, Sir, were perfectly right in not puſhing the argument farther with the French legiſlator, I can readily conceive, as it might have been to the full as imprudent to diſpute with the maſter of an hundred guillotines, as with the maſter of an hundred legions. But you certainly might have ventured to have ſaid ſomething more in anſwer to this partial ſenator, in a Journal deſigned for the peruſal of your own countrymen: You might ſurely have aſſert-

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ed with more than a *perhaps* that the horrors of the war of the roſes " hide " their diminiſhed heads" before the cotemporary ſcenes acted on the bloody theatre of France. You might have urged, that the Iriſh maſſacre (the extent and enormity of which, for the honour of Ireland, is very problematical,) was committed *on* and not *by* Britons; and that the perfidious affair of Glenco lies (if on any one) on the orders of a monarch who was not an Engliſhman, and was executed by Highlanders, the moſt likely of any perſons to be inſtigated by private revenge, and who, from the conſtant habit they were then in of deciding, among all ranks, their private quarrels by the diſk *, which was always part of their

* See Dalrymple's Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, Part II. Book II. where the politeneſs of the Highlanders is attributed to this cauſe, as that of the French alſo has often been.

dreſs,

dreſs, inſtead of that common weapon of Britiſh peaſants, the fiſt, might not have that horror of bloodſhed, which ſeems to make a characteriſtic diſtinction of the inhabitants of this country from thoſe of any other. But allowing the laſt inſtance to exiſt in its fulleſt force, and giving it its greateſt poſſible weight, what does it amount to in an argument concerning the general humanity or inhumanity of the people of Britain or France? ſince, perfectly convinced as I am of their wide difference in this reſpect, I allow that hundreds of wretches may be found in this iſland capable of committing any enormity, and I can readily believe there are many Frenchmen of the moſt humane diſpoſitions, though I am not inclined to reckon the two bloody executioners, who were taken with a * ſudden fit of ſentimental curioſity, among the number.

* Dr. Moore's Journal, Vol. II. p. 269.

From

From all I have read in hiſtory, of France, from all I have heard in converſation, with Frenchmen, cruelty to both ſexes and brutality to women, have in all ages and in all ſituations been a ſtriking general mark of diſtinction of the French national character, when it has had an opportunity of diſplaying itſelf, unfettered by thoſe reſtraints with which the artificial manners introduced by the court of Lewis the Fourteenth had confined it: and the ſame hiſtorical evidence, with a much greater opportunity of perſonal evidence, convinces me that the direct reverſe in both caſes is that of the Britiſh nation, in contradiſtinction to France, and in diſtinction from every other country in Europe, not any, the moſt nearly connected with us, excepted

My preſent plan leads me only to conſider the oppoſition in theſe reſpects, between Great Britian and France. The evidence

evidence I muſt produce to eſtabliſh this, will, I feel, be unpleaſant in the detail; but I truſt the neceſſity of vindicating the inſulted honour of my country, will apologize for the ſcenes of cruelty, and ſometimes of indelicacy that muſt be detailed.

To begin with the earlier periods of French hiſtory. In the 13th century, Simon de Montfort, after the capture of Lavaur, hanged eighty Knights who belonged to the garriſon. He ſeized the lady of Lavaur, who was a widow, he ordered her to be thrown alive into a pit, which he immediately cauſed to be filled with large ſtones. At the capture of the caſtle of Bram, after a ſiege of three days, he became maſter of the place, he took an hundred men, whoſe noſes he cut off, and whoſe eyes he put out, and then ſent them away under the conduct of a man, whom he left with one eye.*

* Mezerai, Dulaure.

On

* On May 29, 1418, Perrinet le Clerc gave entrance to the Burgundian party, by ſtealing from his father, (the officer of the watch) the key of a gate of Paris. The mob of Paris joined the Burgundians, and after murdering all they met in the ſtreets, and caſting into priſon all the ſuſpected perſons, they remained peaceable about twelve days, which they employed in pillaging the city. On June 12, murder raged again, the priſons were forced, all the chief citizens, two archbiſhops, ſix biſhops, many preſidents, counſellors, and maſters of requeſts, were ſlain by the ſword, or daſhed to pieces by being thrown from high towers and caught upon pikes. The conſtable Armagne, and the chancellor Marle, were dragged through the ſtreets and thrown into a ſink. The little Chatelet was ſet on fire when full of wretched priſoners, and the whole number burned, or ſmothered by the ſmoke, four thouſand

women and children are computed to have fallen during this maſſacre.*'

The following exploits of the 15th century, I ſhall relate in the language in which they were originally recorded.

'Le Bâtard de Bourbon avoit violé une femme ſur le corps de ſon mari, enſuite il avoit fait battre et decouper le mari, tant que'c'étoit pitié à voir.†'

'Quand un preud'homme avoit une jeune femme, et ils, (les ſeigneurs,) le pourvient prendre, et il, (le mari,) ne pouvoit payer la rançon qu'on lui demandoit, ils le tourmentoient et tyranniſoient moult grievement; et les aucuns mettoient en grandes huches (coffres); puis prenoient les femmes et les mettoient par force ſur le convercle de la huche où le bonne homme eſtoit et crioient, "Furcifer, uxorem tuam nunc ſuper hanc ciſtam conſtupratur." Et

* Mezerai, St. Foix. † Vie de Richemont.

ainſi

ainſi le faiſoient, et quand ils avoient fait leur male œuvre, ils laiſſoient le pouvre périr là dedans s'il ne payoit la rançon qu'ils lui demandoient.*'

This detail, ſhocking as it is, was however ſurpaſſed by the abominable cruelties committed by Laval about the ſame period. ' He kept, (ſays Mezerai) boys and girls, whom he afterwards killed to uſe their blood for magical purpoſes.' And Lobineau, in his hiſtory of Bretagne, finiſhes his portrait by this horrid recital.

He ſays, ' Sans avoir d'habitudes avec les femmes, il s'abandonnoit aux plus infames débauches que l'imagination puiſſe ſe repreſenter ; et par un déréglement inconcevable, les malheureuſes victimes de ſa brutalité n'avoient de charmes pour lui, que dans le moment qu'elles expiroient ; cet homme abominable ſe divertiſſoit aux

* Journal de Paris, Dulaure.

mouvemens convulfifs que donnoient a ces innocentes victimes les approches de la mort qu'il lui faiſoit lui-même ſouffrir aſſez ſouvent de ſa propre main. Par les procès-verbaux qui en fut dreſſés, et par ſa propre confeſſion, le nombre de ces miſerables enfans qui furent ſacrifiés à ſa lubricité, dans les châteaux de Machecou, et Chantocé ſe montoit à près de cent, ſans compter les enfans qu'il avoit fait mourir à Nantes, a Vannes et ailleurs.'

The following deed is a piece of wanton atrocity not to be paralleled. 'Vauru had taken a young peaſant in the fields, and had put him in priſon at Meaux. This peaſant had a young wife, who immediately ran to enquire at what price they would give her huſband his liberty. Vauru demanded on exorbitant ſum, and declared, he muſt have it in a very ſhort time, or elſe the priſoner would be hanged. The young woman employed every re-

ſource

ſource to procure the ſum required, which ſhe could not accompliſh till a day after the time ſpecified. She haſtened with the money to Meaux, and demanded the liberty of her huſband; Vauru received the money, he then ordered the woman to be conducted to the public ſquare, and ſhewed her the dead body of her huſband hanging. The young woman, uttering ſhrieks of deſpair, reproached Vauru for his cruelty. On which he cauſed her to be beaten, to have her garments torn, and to be tied, almoſt naked, to a tree, from the branches of which a great number of dead bodies were ſuſpended of thoſe whom Vauru had executed with his own hands. She paſſed the night in this ſituation. The wolves came, and devoured her alive, and tore from her womb the infant which ſhe bore.*

* Dulaure.

Theſe, it may be ſaid, are inſtances of Ariſtocratical oppreſſion. Let us ſee how well the peaſants knew to retaliate. The national character of wanton brutality, and ſavage cruelty ſeems equally to have pervaded all ranks.

After the battle of Poitiers, (a battle where the unequalled valour of the Engliſh army in the combat received redoubled luſtre from the attentive and delicate regard ſhewn by the victors to their vanquiſhed enemies,) the King of France being taken priſoner, and the greateſt part of the ſuperior nobility, either ſlain in the field or partakers of his captivity; the order of nobles, deprived of their chiefs, were reduced to a ſtate of inactivity. At this critical juncture, the peaſants reſolved to deſtroy the whole body of the nobleſſe, who were become odious to them for their oppreſſive cruelty. A faction, diſtinguiſhed by the name of La Jacquerie firſt aſ-

ſembled

ſembled in the diſtrict of the Beauvoiſis, and, extending into the other provinces, threatened a total extirpation of the whole gentry of the kingdom.

The following are ſome of the particulars of the proceedings of this banditti, as detailed by the French writers.

'More than an hundred thouſand armed peaſants, reſolved to extirminate the order of nobles, ravaged their eſtates, burnt their caſtles, and violently put to death the knights, eſquires, and gentlemen, who fell in their way, without ſparing women and children. This band of ruffians increaſed to ſuch a degree, that they overſpread the whole country. The more to ſignalize their inveterate hatred againſt all the nobility, and, as if to inſult the mildneſs and humanity of chivalry, they conſidered the exerciſe of the moſt brutal ferocity and the moſt barbarous inhumanity as a virtue.'

To

To this Foiſſart adds, 'I dare not write the horrible deeds they did to ladies and damſels. After violating, with the moſt ſavage brutality, a lady and her daughters, they compelled them to eat a piece of the huſband roaſted, and then put them to a cruel death.' But to purſue the narrative.

'The Ducheſs of Normandy, wife to the Regent, the Ducheſs of Orleans, and three hundred ladies, married and ſingle, were at Meaux with the Duke of Orleans, but were not more in ſafety there. Several detachments of this furious rabble, joined by others, having aſſembled from Paris and its environs, thought themſelves ſure of dividing a prey which it ſeemed impoſſible could eſcape them. The inhabitants had opened their gates, and, in conjunction with the rebels, had reduced the ladies to the neceſſity of entrenching themſelves in the place called Le Marché

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de Meaux. The danger was imminent; there was no excefs of brutality which they had not reafon to expect from thefe unbridled hordes, whom nothing ftopped, and by whom nothing was refpected. The Count de Foix, and the Captal de Buch, who were juft returned from the Pruffian crufade, heard thefe mournful tidings at Chalons. Though their whole number confifted only of fixty Knights, with their ordinary attendants, they immediately formed the refolution of going to join the fmall party who defended the fortrefs of Meaux. The honor of the ladies neither permitted the Count de Foix to reflect on the danger, nor the Captal de Buch,* to remember he was an Engliſhman. He

* The Captal de Buch was entruſted by the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers, with the execution of a manœuvre, that was deciſive of the ſucceſs of that day. He was ſo much attached to that Prince, that he was unable to ſurvive his death.—HENRY.

eagerly availed himself of the liberty, that the truce between England and France, afforded, of following sentiments, more powerful in the breast of Knights, than national enmity:* it is sufficient to add, that their gallant efforts were crowned with success, and the peasants defeated with great slaughter.

And now, Sir, where will your friend, the Gallic Legislator, find a parallel to these enormities in the annals of Britain? Will you permit him again, without refuting his sophistry, to prove the inhumanity of your countrymen, from the horrors they suffered by the inhumanity of others? Shall we impute to the Anglo-Saxons themselves, the dreadful scenes of devastation, the desolated towns, the insulted laws, the rapes, and massacres, with which their barbarian conquerors tried to enforce on an unwilling

* Memoires sur la Chevalerie par St. Palaye.

people,

people, the language, the juriſprudence, and the manners of France? In the following extracts from ſome of our elder hiſtorians, do we find the character of the Normans moſt congenial with the manners that have at any time prevailed among the people of Britain, or with thoſe which have ever formed the baſis of the French national character in every age, and under every circumſtance?

For inſtances of their cruelty, 'they grievouſly oppreſſed the poor people with building of caſtles, and when they were built, they filled them with wicked men, or rather devils, that ſeized both men and women, who, they imagined, had any money, threw them into priſon, and put them to more cruel tortures than the martyrs ever endured. They ſuffocated ſome in mud, and ſuſpended others by the feet, or the head, or the thumbs, kindling fires below them. They ſqueezed the heads of

ſome with knotted cords till they pierced their brains, while they threw others into dungeons, ſwarming with ſerpents, ſnakes and toads.*'

For their brutal luſt. 'When the great King William conquered this land, many of his followers, elated by ſo great a victory, and thinking that every thing ought to be ſubſervient to their will and pleaſure, not only ſeized the poſſeſſions of the conquered, but invaded the honour of their matrons, and virgins, with the moſt unbridled wantonneſs, whenever they had an opportunity. This obliged many young ladies, who dreaded their violence, to take ſhelter in nunneries, and put on the vail, to preſerve their honour.†'

Your

* Chron. Saxon.

† Eadmeri Hiſt.

The following quotation ſerves to ſhew the ſource from which the Norman character was derived.

'Nefandum

Your friend, Sir, is content to ground his firſt accuſation of Engliſh ferocity, on what happened during the civil war between the houſes of York and Lancaſter. As warmth in argument never carries conviction of any thing but the ſincerity of the arguer, I will ſurpreſs the indignation I muſt feel, when I find you admitting this charge in its fulleſt extent, and expreſſing ſome degree of doubt, whether the enormities 'committed in Great Britain and Ire-'land during an age of barbariſm and ſuper-'ſtition, were equalled by thoſe committed 'in France at the ſame periods.' Strange muſt have been that partiality, which could have blinded you to the facts I have ſtated, (a very ſmall proportion of thoſe with which the annals of France abound;) and implicit indeed muſt have been your

'Nefandum igitur illud et enorme nimis Normano-'rum crimen, quod olim a Francis mutuari, nunc ſibi 'velut proprium vindicant.' ANGLIA SACRA.

confidence

confidence in the aſſertions of your French friend, when you gave him credit for events ſo highly diſhonorable to your country, which are totally unſupported by any hiſtorical evidence whatever.

To uſe a ſentence of your friends, "when great intereſts are at ſtake, and "when human paſſions are inflamed, and "agitated, in the higheſt degree;" ambition has never been ſcrupulous of removing the objects of its jealouſy, or its fear. This has ever been the caſe of civil war in every age and country, nor will Britain, or its inhabitants, claim an exemption from the paſſions and vices incident to all mankind. In the war between the Roſes, the leaders of either party ſuffered, as their opponents prevailed, and, as in all other domeſtic ſtruggles,

——Scaffolds gleaned the refuſe of the ſword.

The heads of Princes and Noblemen were cut off; ſuppoſe, (a large computation,) three

three hundred. They played a deep game and ſet their lives at ſtake; but where, except theſe great men (who periſhed on the ſcaffold, and under the vail at leaſt of the law,) was there an inſtance of a man ſlain in cool blood? numbers fell in the field by the chance of war; but it was obſerved, that generally the officers were ſlain, and the private men ſpared, when the fate of battle had rendered one party ſuperior. Our hiſtorians, it is true, record one inſtance of a grocer being put to death, by the order of Edward the Fourth, for ſaying, he would make his ſon heir to the crown, meaning his ſign. But this was only the act of a tyrant, jealous in the extreme of a title, which he had obtained with ſuch difficulty, and which was ſtill conteſted. Some private enormities alſo may have been committed, for certainly every man is not capable of exerciſing unlimited power over the lives of his fellow creatures with moderation;

deration; but theſe muſt have been very few indeed, to have eſcaped the obſervation of every hiſtorian, while each was anxious to blacken, by all poſſible means, the charracter of that party to which he was adverſe; and who certainly did not think the fate of obſcure individuals too unintereſting for hiſtorical detail, as is obvious from the ſtory which has juſt been mentioned of the unfortunate grocer. That any thing like the crimes with which the pages of the French cotemporary hiſtorian are ſtained, could be imputed to this country, during theſe wars, though it might enter into the enflamed and partial imagination of a French republican, is an idea that one is aſtoniſhed to find entertained for a moment in the mind of any diſpaſſionate man, who is at all verſed in the hiſtory of either country.

I come now, Sir, to a wonderful inſtance of your candour in debate. Your antagoniſt

goniſt (if I may call a perſon by that name who has no one to contend with him) never ſays a word of the Engliſh civil war of the laſt century. A war in one melancholy inſtance ſo exactly in point with the fatal events of the preſent day in France. The ſilence of the Frenchman is eaſily to be accounted for; but perhaps ſome of your countrymen, who feel themſelves injured by the parallel drawn by him between French and Britiſh cruelty, may think *you* carried your candour a little too far, when you neglected to remind him of the ſtriking contraſt between the ſavage barbarity which attended the wars of the league, and the unexampled mildneſs which was the general character of the unhappy ſtruggles in this country between its King and its Parliament.

To ſuch candour, Sir, I have no pretence, but am ready to ſay of her, with the ſatiriſt,

When ſhe to villains would a ſanction give,
And ſhelter thoſe who are not fit to live:
When ſhe would ſcreen the guilty from a bluſh,
And bids me ſpare whom Reaſon bids me cruſh;
All leagues with Candour proudly I reſign;
She cannot be for honour's turn, or mine *.

Anxious then, Sir, only to vindicate the honour of my traduced country, I ſhall draw, what you could ſo much better have drawn, a faint picture (one in its full colours, would preſs too home on Britiſh feelings) of the dreadful ſcenes tranſacted during the war of the league, from materials furniſhed by French writers, eye-witneſſes, and ſometimes even ſelf-applauded actors of the ſhocking events they relate; and then contraſt them with the comparative humanity which marked the people of this country when afflicted by

* Churchill.

Providence

Providence with the ſame dreadful calamity of domeſtic war.

I will begin with a general character of the civil wars of France, given by a writer of the firſt eminence, and who may juſtly ſay of the events he deſcribes,

——Quæque ipſe miſerrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui.——

'I live (he ſays) at a time in which we abound with incredible examples of this vice, (cruelty) through the licentiouſneſs of our civil wars: and we ſee nothing recorded in ancient hiſtory, carried to a greater exceſs, than what we ourſelves experience every day. But this has by no means reconciled me to it. I could with difficulty perſuade myſelf, before I had ſeen it, that ſouls could be found ſo ferocious, as to commit murder voluntarily for the ſake only of the pleaſure of the act. Who

could mangle and diſlocate the limbs of another, and ſharpen their invention to diſcover unuſual torments, and new modes of death, without enmity, without profit, and for the ſole end of enjoying the pleaſing ſpectacle of the pitiable geſtures and motions, the lamentable cries and groans of a man expiring in agonies. This is the extreme point to which cruelty can attain. *Ut homo hominem, non iratus, non timens, tantum ſpectaturus occidat.**' From this humane writer, who was hurt at being a ſpectator of ſuch ſcenes, let us turn now to one who prides himſelf on being an actor among them.

This amiable gentleman begins by declaring his reſolution of employing every cruelty in his power, ' not only on ' thoſe in actual rebellion, but even on ' thoſe who ſhould ſpeak againſt the royal

* Eſſais de Montaigne, L. II. Chap. xi.

' dig-

'dignity.*' His firſt exploit, as he tells with great ſelf applauſe, and much pleaſantry, was the apprehenſion of two laymen and a Hugenot deacon, who had ſhewn ſome diſreſpect to a crucifix. 'He immediately ordered the two firſt to be hanged on a tree; but as the deacon was only eighteen years of age, he *humanely* ſaved him to carry the news to his brethren, and *only* cauſed him to be ſo ſeverely beaten by the executioners, that he died in ten or twelve days. †

And afterwards, he ſays, 'I underſtood that Gironde commanded a party of ſixty or eighty Hugenots. I ſurprized them, and cauſed ſixty to be hanged on the pillars of the hall without further ceremony.—We halted one night at Sauveterre, where I took fifteen or ſixteen, and executed them without waſting paper and ink, or hear-

* Commentaires de Montluc. † Ibid.

ing

ing their defence; for theſe people have golden words.*'

This Montluc ſeems to pride himſelf equally on his good faith, as on his humanity. Speaking of the ſurrender of a fortreſs, 'When I ſaw that M. de Savignac, and Captain Fabien, wiſhed to ſave Favas, and were deſirous of making fair war with him becauſe he had the reputation of being a good ſoldier, I told them, ſince they were going to capitulate, according to their deſire, I would ſign their capitulation, though I wiſhed to have made a complete riddance of them. However, when they were gone from me, I ſent a gentleman after them to ſpeak ſecretly to the ſoldiers, and ſome of the officers, that while they were engaged in ſettling the terms, they ſhould take an opportunity of entering on one ſide or the other, and put them all to the ſword.†'

* Ibid. † Ibid

I ſhall

I ſhall finiſh the confeſſions of this volunteer executioner, with his curious juſtification of himſelf on an imputation caſt on him. 'We have been accuſed of encouraging the war, and prolonging the duration of it, as they do law-ſuits in the courts of juſtice. The devil take all, if I had ever any ſuch intention; being able to ſay with truth, that there was no lieutenant of the King in France, who brought more Hugenots to the poignard or the halter than myſelf. This was not wiſhing to encourage the war.*'

De Thou records an inſtance of French cruelty to their allies during the ſame war. 'In the year 1578, the Duke of Anjou, brother to Henry III. had entered the low countries to aſſiſt the allies againſt the Spaniards. There was an officer in the army named Pont, that was quartered in the village of Becourt, with a rich farmer, named Jean Millet, who

* Ibid.

had

had three very handſome daughters. The eldeſt, who had the management of the family, was very attentive to her gueſt, as thinking it her intereſt to gain his favour. The officer found himſelf, after a few days, captivated with the charms which were ſo conſtantly before his eyes. Reſolved to ſatisfy his paſſion, and deſirous of haſtening the time, he invited the father and daughter to ſup with him. In the middle of the entertainment, he, with a laugh, aſked the young woman in marriage. The father, without appearing to ſee through his baſe deſigns, refuſed him civilly on account of the inequality of their conditions. Pont threw himſelf immediately into a rage, puſhed him violently out of the room, detained the young woman, who tried to eſcape, by force, and after abuſing her by violence, gave her up to the brutality of ſome of his ſubalterns, who had aſſiſted his project,

and

and then they all obliged her to ſit down with them at the table. This young perſon, who was only ſixteen, ſhewed, on this occaſion, a courage above her age. Being perſuaded that there was leſs occaſion in the preſent moment to lament her misfortune, than to try to revenge the outrage ſhe had received, ſhe had the force of mind to conceal her reſentment; ſhe affected even to liſten with complacency to their inſolent addreſſes. But ſhe was not long obliged to continue under this reſtraint; for the Captain Pont turning round to ſpeak to one of his people, ſhe ſeized a knife, and plunged it into his heart. She immediately threw down the table, and running out while the reſt were all employed in aſſiſting the officer, ſhe haſtened to her father, told him all that had paſſed, and exhorted him to make his eſcape with his two other

daughters. As for herſelf, life was too great a burthen for her to deign to avail herſelf of the opportunity ſhe had of withdrawing from the puniſhment that threatened her. She boldly waited for her raviſhers, who tied her to a tree, and killed her with muſket ſhots. Before ſhe expired, this heroic girl ſaid aloud to her executioners, "Fire, barbarians! After "the marks I bear of your brutality, "which have rendered me unworthy to "live, I receive as a favour from your "hands the death your ſhots are going "to inflict upon me. Heaven, who has "revenged my honour by the deſtruction "of your chief, will not ſuffer this laſt "crime to go unpuniſhed." The event juſtified her prediction. The father, worthy of ſuch a daughter, rouſed the indignation of the neighbouring peaſants.

They

They flew to arms in every quarter, and exterminated the aſſaſſins *.'

For the moſt execrable inſtances of general inhumanity and carnage during the civil wars of France, the following events may ſuffice. 'At the taking of Orange, the victorious catholics, under the command of Serbellon, were guilty of the moſt dreadful exceſſes. After having killed in their firſt fury all who fell into their hands, they treated thoſe who eſcaped from their firſt blows with the greateſt inhumanity. They wounded ſome with ſlight but frequent ſtabs of the poignard, that they might have time to feel all the horrors of death; ſome they precipitated on pikes and drawn ſwords; ſome they ſuſpended on iron hooks, and burned; and ſome they cut to pieces. They gave no quarter to the old, to the lame, to

* De Thou, Dict d'Anecdotes.

thoſe confined to their beds by illneſs, to the poor in the hoſpitals, nor to the labourers of the harveſt, whom a ſiege, ſo ſudden and unexpected, had not permitted to leave the town, though they had no other arms than their ſickles. Moſt of the women were killed and hung out at the windows and doors. (* My pen is ready to fall from my hand as I write.) Their children were torn from their arms, and ſhot. Many virgins were violated. Pluſieurs jeunes garçons, enlevés pour aſſouvir l'infâme paſſion de ces abominable vanqueurs, furent détenus dans une affreuſe captivité, dont ils ne ſorterent que longtemps après. To theſe cruelties the moſt horrible ſpectacles were added. The dead bodies of the women were expoſed naked, attended by indignities too ſhocking to relate. The bodies of the men were alſo expoſed, their

* This parentheſis, is as well as the whole quotation, from De Thou

wounds

wounds being covered with parts of the holy ſcriptures, the leaves of which were torn, and thrown about, only becauſe they were in the vulgar tongue. The garriſon of the citadal capitulated, with a promiſe of having their lives ſpared; but this promiſe was not kept, nine hundred men were either precipitated from the walls, or put to the ſword; the blood ran in the ſtreets. They concluded by ſetting fire to the town. Theſe were not infernal furies, they were not enraged tigers, who give themſelves up to ſuch atrocious exploits. They were men, they were Frenchmen, they were catholics, who pretended to be fighting for the cauſe of religion.'

The other is of later date. ' At the taking of Negripeliſſe, in the reign of Lewis XIII. every man was put to the ſword, ten only excepted, who requeſted to be hanged, and their requeſt was granted.

ed. The women were ſtill treated with great ſeverity, being firſt victims of the victors luſt, and then of their fury. Thoſe who made little reſiſtance were only ſtabbed, but ſuch as obſtinately defended their honour, received the moſt dreadful treatment: Pudenda pulvere nitrato impleverunt, quo, ignem admoventes, miſerè perierunt.*'

The horrors of the maſſacre at Paris in 1572 are too generally known to need repetition; ſuffice it to ſay, that event is unequalled in hiſtory, for the numbers ſlain and the cruelty with which the devoted Hugenots were ſlaughtered. I will cloſe this ſhocking narrative of abominations diſgraceful to human nature, with the calculation of the enormities committed during the firſt twenty years of the French civil wars, which is given by Frou-

* Heylin's Survey of France. Modern Univ. Hiſt.

menteau

menteau in his *Secret des finances*. He computes 765200 perſons killed; 12300 women violated; nine cities burned, or raſed to the ground; 252 villages burned; 118250 houſes burned, or deſtroyed. A French * writer obſerves on this, that the troubles laſted twenty years beyond the date of this calculation; and therefore, to reaſon from analogy, we may double this amount for the whole forty years of the war.

The only remark I ſhall make on theſe relations is, that they are not the malicious inventions of jealous rivals, but are all taken from French writers.

To turn from theſe ſcenes of horror to objects leſs diſguſting, let us caſt our eyes on the civil wars that raged in this country in the laſt century. Of the minute detail of thoſe unhappy times we have

* Dulaure.

ample

ample means of information, they were even in the memory of ſome, with whom very old perſons, yet living, have converſed in their youth. That thoſe days were remarked with calamity, that thouſands of gallant ſoldiers fell in the field, that much noble blood ſtreamed on the ſcaffold, is not to be denied; but never was a war of the kind carried on with ſo little hurt to thoſe, not actually and perſonally, engaged in it. The laws, even for the protection of perſonal ſecurity and properity, ſeem to have been in force as much as in times of profound tranquility, in every part of the kingdom. And I believe it will puzzle malice itſelf to point out * an act of wanton cruelty, or brutality, that was perpetrated during the whole courſe of that unfortunate rebellion. One inſtance alone

* Whitelock indeed mentions one broken capitulation, and nine clothiers hanged; but a writer on the royal ſide denies the fact.

of

of unparalleled moderation, I will recal, Sir, to your recollection: When Monk's army was near the metropolis, and he ſent to order the republican regiments, then in London, to quit it, the ſervice, though, with the greateſt reluctance, was performed with as little uproar in a defenceleſs and opulent city, as a regular change of quarters in the time of peace. The ſame thing, and nearly under the ſame circumſtances, happened at the Revolution.

The preſent cruelties acting in France, I need not, Sir, point out to you. Your journal furniſhes abundant proofs of them. Providentially this country has no contraſt to ſhew, under the ſame circumſtances; but who ever will look back to the year 1780, when an unreſiſted rabble was the ſole ſovereign of the metropolis for ſeveral days, without committing one ſerious act of perſonal violence, may perhaps be inclined to think, ſomething more of the

milk of human kindneſs exiſts in the boſoms of Britons, than in thoſe of their atrocious neighbours.

Much has been ſaid of the polite and refined manners of the French, in their happier days; if thoſe days could be called happy in which every paſſion was awed by deſpotiſm, and every inclination regulated by faſhion; and it has been held forth univerſally as an object of the greateſt wonder, that ſo ſudden and radical a change ſhould have taken place in the ſentiments, as well as the actions of a nation, ſo long the pattern to Europe, of every thing elegant, learned, and magnificent. But who ever will reflect on the manners and exploits of the French, at the æra immediately proceeding the age of Lewis XIV, will have more reaſon to wonder at the ſudden change which then took place from the greateſt barbariſm, to the higheſt poliſh of which civil ſociety has been thought capable;

capable; than at their ſpeedy relapſe into their real character, when thoſe cauſes ceaſed, which had rather vailed it from the eye, than radically altered it. During a temporary ſuſpenſion of its fury, the ſides of Ætna may be covered with vinyards and harveſts; but the elements of deſtruction are ſtill concealed in the bowels of the mountain, ready to burſt forth when the fermentation has attained its criſis, and to mark their track by ſcenes of ruin and devaſtation.

That the French character retained much of its natural ferocity in the moſt ſplendid period of their refinement is remarked by Voltaire in ſeveral parts of his voluminous works. Speaking of the execution of the Chevalier de la Barré at Abbeville, in the year 1764. He adds, 'foreign nations judge of France by its theatres, by its romances, by its fine poetry, by the opera girls whoſe manners

are ſo ſoft, by the graces of our opera dancers, by the enchanting recitation of Mademoiſelle Clairon. They do not know that at bottom, there does not exiſt a more cruel nation than the French.*'

The following paſſage from Candide, gives a ſhort, but juſt idea of his opinion of the French.

'Ah les monſtres! s'ecria Candide; quoi! de telles horreurs chez un peuple qui danſe, et qui chante! ne pourrai-je ſortir au plus vite de ce pays ou *des ſinges agacent des tigres.*†'

That

* La Raiſon par l'Alphabet, Art. *Torture* Vol. 38, Voltaire Ed. 1769.

† Chandide Ch. xxii. I truſt the reader will not be diſpleaſed with the following *jeu d'eſprit* of one of the firſt literary characters of the preſent time. A lady mentioned this paſſage in a company where he was preſent. He ſaid, with great gravity. "Madam, I hate "to hear reflections caſt on large bodies." The lady was confuſed at having hazarded a ſentiment which

ſeemed

That this general opinion of Voltaire's as to the natural ferocity of the French, ſtill lurking beneath the maſk of their artificial politeneſs, is founded on fact, I will give two examples.

'The town of Lagny, ſix leagues from Paris, having oppoſed Henry IV. during the civil war, the Marechal de L'Orges took it by ſtorm. He did not put the inhabitants to the ſword; but with a pretended lenity, invited them to a ball; when on a certain ſignal, the lights were extinguiſhed, the ſoldiers admitted, and all the women, without deſtinction, violated. In conſequence of this, the name of L'Orges has always been held in deteſtation by the people of Lagny, and the mention of it conſidered as an affront to them: and as

ſeemed to meet with his diſapprobation, when the gentleman, after a ſhort pauſe, went on, "Pray, Madam, "what have the unfortunate monkeys and tigers done, "that you ſhould compare them with the French?"

it

it became a common trick with ſtrangers to inſult them, by ludicrouſly aſking the price of barley (L'Orge), they adopted the reſolution of plunging every perſon in a fountain in the town, who aſked this queſtion, without ſhewing he really meant to buy barley, by putting his hand in a ſack of it *. Perſons unacquainted with the cuſtom were often drawn in to aſk this queſtion, and always ſuffered the penalty.'

'In the month of September, 1766, a lady, rather handſome, paſſing through Lagny in the ſtage-coach, was induced by her fellow travellers to hazard this unfortunate queſtion. The populace followed the coach to the inn, and inſiſted on her being given up to them. The perſons at the inn being unable to protect her, conveyed her privately to a church. The

* We are not informed how the ſack of barley was to be enquired for.

populace did not dare violate this aſylum; but they applied to the vicar, that ſhe might be given up. After trying in vain to perſuade them to deſiſt, he adviſed her to ſubmit; but ſhe declared herſelf to be in a critical ſituation, which might make the immerſion fatal to her. This * circumſtance was explained to the people, but they were deaf to all entreaties. At length application was made to the lord of the town, who, ſeeing to what a height the tumult had riſen, ordered the Marechauſſée to deliver the woman up. And in ſpite of her ſupplications and tears, ſhe

* Perhaps it may be thought a proof that our manners were never ſo refined as thoſe of the French, when I mention my firm belief, that thouſands of my country women would have met inevitable death rather than have tried to avoid it by making ſuch a public declaration. But we have been branded by our gentle and poliſhed neighbours with the appellation of *the Savages of Europe*.

was plunged by the remorſeleſs ruffians into the cold water of the fountain, out of which ſhe was taken in dreadful convulſions, and expired in a few minutes after *.'

Paſſing over the firſt infernal act of perfidy and brutality, let me aſk, if an Engliſh mob would perſiſt in the perpetration of ſuch a piece of unmanly cruelty, eſpecially on a woman? Or ſuppoſing it poſſible, could a magiſtrate be found in this iſland cowardly enough to give way to it? Suppoſing, however, for a moment, *that* alſo poſſible, would not the laws have been put into ſevere execution both againſt the ringleaders of the tumult, and the magiſtrate, who ſhould order the officers of juſtice to be accomplices in a murder? A crime which we are not ſo far advanced

* Nouvelle Deſcription des Environs de Paris, publiſhed at Paris 1786, and quoted in Andrews's Anecdotes.

in French philoſophy as to conſider with the *ſang froid* of your friend at Clermont, and to ſay coolly, ‘ *C'eſt un homme* ‘ *de moins*, and take no further notice of ‘ the matter.*’

The next inſtance is of ſtill later date, and is an example of unnatural cruelty and barbarity not to be equalled in the hiſtory of human nature. I ſhall not prophane the Engliſh language by a tranſlation of it. ‘ Blaiſe Ferrage Seyés du Conte de Comminge, Maçon de profeſſion, très brun, petit de taille mais d'un force extraordinaire, s'etoit choiſi a la maniere des ours, une retrait dans l'antre d'un rocher placé ſur le haut d'une montagne. Il enlevoit les filles, et les femmes; pourſuivoient à coups de fuſil celles qui fugoient; en abuſoient quoique mourantes, et baignées dans leur ſang. Il leur coup-

* Journal, Vol. II. p. 17.

oit ordinairement, les ſeins, et les cuiſſes ; et leur arrachant les inteſtins et le foye qu'il mangéoit. It marchoit toujours armé d'une ceinture de piſtolets, et d'un fuſil à deux coups, et d'un dogue. Enfin, par arret du parlement de Toulouſe, ce *monſtre* fut executé le 13 Decembre 1782. On fait monter a plus de 80 les filles et les femmes, victimes de ſa brutalité *.'

I here, Sir, wiſh to cloſe the painful recital of theſe tales of horror. But before I conclude my letter, I have yet, I think, a ſtronger proof to urge of the radical inhumanity of the French character. The real character of a nation may be, perhaps, better learned from their habits of converſation, their books of amuſement, and diverſion, than from their more ſerious writings and actions. To apply to

* Voyez le Mercure de France, N. 10. An. 1783. Our *London Monſter* was a lamb, compared with this.

novels

novels and romances what Selden ſays of libels, ‘ You may ſee by them how the ‘ wind ſits; as, take a ſtraw and throw ‘ it up in the air, you ſhall ſee by that ‘ which way the wind is, which you ſhall ‘ not do by caſting up a ſtone.’

I here, Sir, imagine you, and, perhaps, many others, may ſmile at what you may eſteem partiality. I am well aware of the common laugh of our neighbours againſt us about the ſanguinary complexion of our drama. The ridiculous exceſs to which the falſe refinement of the French ſtage has carried the rule *de n'enſanglanter pas le theatre*, I alſo well know. I might, perhaps, avail myſelf in this caſe, of a ſuppoſition, that the keeping the French from ſcenes of horror and bloodſhed on the ſtage was one of the arts employed by thoſe who tried to humanize them. But I will abandon that ground of argument. I will allow, that the people

of England, in general, love to have their paſſions rouſed to the utmoſt by the ſtrongeſt pictures of fictitious horror and diſtreſs. But ſuch ſcenes are confined to the tragic muſe. They are intended to excite, and always do excite, pity and terror in the boſom that is affected by them. But tortures and calamities, whether real or fictitious, have never been conſidered as objects of mirth in this country. Our novels and our comedies are unſtained with murder, and we do not think either the death or the ſufferings of our fellow-creatures a good joke, or that (as Touchſtone ſays in *As You Like It*) 'the breaking of ribs is ſport for ladies.'

There are more murders, and deaths of various kinds, in the comic novel of Gil Blas, than in all the volumes put together that load the ſhelves of our circulating libraries;

libraries; thoſe only excepted, which, having a fatal cataſtrophe, may be conſidered as allied to tragedy, and calculated to waken the ſame feelings. Rabelais has, what he ſeems to think a wonderfully pleaſant ſtory, of a prieſt thrown from an unruly horſe, and kicked to pieces in a moſt ſhocking manner, the particulars of which he details in a very accurate narrative; not to mention his ludicrous account of the drowning of Dindon and his ſhepherds.

Good comic writers will never uſe means to excite laughter, which they are not certain of being effectual. There is a remarkable ſtory in the French *Dictionaire d'Anecdotes, Article Comedie Larmoyant*, which ſhews that in France, real objects of cruelty are reckoned proper ſubjects of ridicule as well as fictitious ones.

'At the battle of Spires, a regiment was ordered not to give quarter. A German

man officer aſking his life of one of ours, he anſwered him; "Sir, aſk me any "thing elſe; but as for your life, I am "ſorry it is not in my power to oblige "you." This *naiveté* paſſed from mouth to mouth; and *excited laughter, in the midſt of carnage.*' Were theſe men, or fiends?

The French ladies alſo have, formerly, taken pleaſure in ſuch ſcenes. 'St. Point, governor of Macon, a town taken from the Huguenots in 1562, made it a ſport to cauſe the Calviniſts to leap into the river Saône. He encreaſed the number of his cruelties, when the principal ladies of the town and its environs dined with him. When they were ready to riſe from table, he uſed to aſk, *if the farce was ready*; a kind of watch word, by which he enquired if they had taken out of priſon ſome of the victims, who he intended ſhould afford a cruel amuſement to his

his company. When every thing was ready, he took the ladies to walk on the banks of the river, and ordered ſome of theſe wretches to be thrown from the bridge, amuſing himſelf, and his fair and amiable gueſts, with comparing the different degrees of alertneſs, and activity, with which they leaped from the battlements.*

The queſtion of a lady to a judge, and his anſwer, in the comedy of les Plaideurs, is no bad illuſtration of this part of the French character.

'Hé Monſieur, peut on voir ſouffrir des malheureux?
'Bon, cela fait toujours paſſer une heure ou deux.'

I now, Sir, take my leave of the ſubject, and of yourſelf. Whether the ſentiments were put by you into the mouth of an ideal Frenchman, or were actually ſpoken by a real one, as you have

* Memoires de Tavannes.

detailed

detailed them to the public without an anſwer, or what is worſe, with ſuch an anſwer as is intended to ſhew you think them unanſwerable, they are equally you own; and I have only to wiſh you joy on the candid and patriotic feelings which could tempt you to ſacrifice the honour of your country to an idol, which, like that of Moloch, is

—— "Beſmeared with blood
"Of human ſacrifice, and parents tears,
"Though, for the noiſe of drums and timbrels loud,
"Their childrens cries unheard."——

THE END.